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THE WHITE HOUSE

BRIEFING FOR REPORTERS
BY JODY POWELL AND JACK WATSON

The Briefing Room

(3:37 P.M. EST)

MR. POWELL: Jack Watson has a little reporting to do for you on the transition arrangements. Let me let him do that first. I have very little, if anything, to offer beyond that, but once he's done that and we've dealt with whatever questions you may have on that specific topic, then I'll be glad to deal with whatever else you're interested in.

Q Have you talked to the President today, Jody?

MR. POWELL: No. There goes my reputation.

MR. WATSON: Unaccustomed as I am to presidential transitions, let me briefly outline what we're doing now so that it will be clear what steps we've taken. I think I can do this in a very summary fashion just to bring you up to date on what's happened, literally, in the last two or three days, and then I'll be happy to take any questions you have related to the transition specifically.

Before the President left for Camp David yesterday morning I met privately with him specifically to discuss the next 10-week period and particularly to discuss the arrangements for the transition. As you know, he asked me to coordinate or direct the transition from our side over to Governor Reagan's administration, and I am doing that.

Yesterday afternoon I had a series of conference calls beginning with a conference call with the Cabinet and followed by similar conference calls to all the major agency heads in the government. This morning I met with all of the unit heads and senior White House staff in the Executive Office of the President to pass on the president's instructions that he had given me yesterday morning.

Briefly stated, those instructions are basically two. The first is that the President wants the transition from the Carter administration to Mr. Reagan's forthcoming administration to be as constructive and smooth and effective a transition as has ever occurred. He wants every member of our administration to pledge their best efforts